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Chairman: Mr. Droba (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Slovakia)
later: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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In the absence of Mr. Swe (Myanmar), Mr. Droba (Slovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 77: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Mangray** (Guyana), expressing support for the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that, in the modern conflict-torn world, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations had an important role to play in addressing the continuing threats to peace and security. The successful conduct of peacekeeping operations demanded the commitment of resources, both human and financial. The mobilization of such resources was one of the strategic directions of future work by the world community.

2. In order to discuss the prospects for greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements, a meeting or consultations could be held under the auspices of the heads of the relevant organizations. Such cooperation should complement the primary responsibility of the United Nations; the degree of such cooperation would be a matter for political and diplomatic judgement. Regional organizations, at the very least, should create an extensive network for information and intelligence gathering that could provide an early warning system for the prevention of conflict.

3. Her Government supported the ongoing efforts to enhance the role of women in peacekeeping and measures to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In addition, conflict resolution required interaction at the international level between all parties, whose role should be carefully coordinated in an integrated approach to human security, particularly in the area of development, as peace and development were inseparably linked.

4. **Mr. Tekle** (Eritrea), supporting the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the multifunctional nature of recent peacekeeping operations pointed to the necessity of a broader approach to peacekeeping envisaging the possibility of intervention in the internal affairs of a State during the early critical days of transition, when such intervention was acceptable to the parties in conflict. At the same time, peacekeeping operations had raised some controversial issues concerning, in particular, the abuse of force, the "excessive" and the "robust" use of force, the basis for using such force, misconduct by personnel, relations with local authorities and other aspects of such operations.

5. Eritrea was in favour of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. However, it had to be admitted that the political, financial and other conditions for the activities of such organizations were not always conducive to the effectiveness of their efforts and it would be folly to consign serious issues of peace and security — issues that might decide the fate of nations — to regional organizations merely because of their geographical appurtenance or for reasons of burden-sharing. There was a need to ensure that peacekeeping operations did not exacerbate the situation or perpetuate an unjust status quo. It was also important to adhere strictly to the mandate of the peacekeeping mission and not to exceed it, to abide in good faith by the legal arrangements agreed by the host State and to refrain from any action that would be incompatible with the principle of impartiality. The settlement of disputes by peaceful means must be premised on the supremacy of the rule of law and above all on respect for the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

6. **Mr. Shabery Cheek** (Malaysia), associating his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, emphasized the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the importance of multilateralism in the resolution of conflicts. It was imperative to ensure that missions undertaken on a regional basis were governed by the basic principles of peacekeeping in full conformity with the United Nations Charter.

7. Peacekeeping missions must have clear, realistic and achievable mandates in keeping with the specific nature and requirements of each of them. It was also essential to reinforce the intelligence capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations through the full optimization of the Joint Mission Analysis Cell. The current operational and tactical scenarios required robust rules of engagement. His delegation supported the strengthening of the Peacekeeping Best Practices

Unit and its active role in the development of generic guidelines, procedures and best practices for the conduct of peacekeeping operations. In connection with the increasing demand for peacekeeping operations, Malaysia urged those countries that had well-equipped military forces to take a more active part in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations.

8. In conflict resolution, serious attention had to be paid to the root causes of conflict such as abject poverty, illiteracy, absence of good governance and a range of other problems related to underdevelopment. His delegation agreed that the United Nations must combine peacekeeping with a development-oriented approach and endeavour to achieve comprehensive and durable peace in conflict areas in cooperation with relevant agencies and regional and subregional organizations. The financial situation of the United Nations was an inevitable cause for concern; in that connection, it was necessary further to explore new and innovative ways and means of raising funds for peacekeeping operations. Partnership between the United Nations, the Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries and the wider membership of the United Nations also needed to be further strengthened.

9. **Mr. Jayasinghe** (Sri Lanka) shared the conviction of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that the mere existence of strategic reserve units could deter spoilers and make risk management easier. In that connection, his recommendation to have pre-trained and well-equipped strategic reserve units, which until being deployed to peacekeeping operations would initially be under the command of troop-contributing countries, merited favourable consideration. Sri Lanka was extending its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations and was willing to cooperate with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the establishment of a small body of professional civilian police staff ready to plan, deploy and frame the strategies of the civilian police component of peacekeeping missions.

10. A Peace Support Training Institute had recently been established in Sri Lanka. That facility could be made available for use by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for conducting training courses and seminars on peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the region. With respect to increasing the number of peacekeeping operations, the Security Council had to be satisfied that each mission that was mandated could be adequately supported with financial and human resources. Complementary capacities and approaches could be provided through close coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and multinational arrangements. In order to be able to face new challenges, it was essential for Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

11. **Mr. Calderón** (Ecuador) said that it was essential to increase response capacity and to ensure the highest standard of administrative procedures. He greatly appreciated the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in that area but considered that it was essential to continue with the reforms, which required a firm political will on the part of the Member States.

12. Bearing in mind not only the current conflicts but also their increasing scale, as well as the fact that there had been changes in the types of conflicts and the degree of risk they represented globally and regionally, it was essential to enhance the response capacity of the United Nations not only for conflict resolution but also for preventive action to support peace, stability and security.

13. The main thrust of Ecuador's foreign policy was based on the principles set forth in article 4 of its Political Constitution, in particular condemnation of the use or threat of force, peace, cooperation and equality between States, inter-State relations based on international law and encouragement for the resolution of disputes through legal and peaceful means.

14. Ecuador had always supported the central role of the United Nations in supporting international peace and security and considered that the United Nations peacekeeping operations remained the most effective and viable means of maintaining peace and preventing conflicts.

15. His delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco and Brazil on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group and fully agreed that peace was not possible without development and also that multifunctional missions had a two-fold responsibility, namely the provision of security and assistance for the development process.

16. Success in peacekeeping largely depended on the inclusion in the mandates of multifunctional missions

of measures to eliminate the main causes of armed conflicts, and the main stages in the establishment of democratic institutions in post-conflict countries were stimulation of the development process, creation of a State governed by the rule of law, introduction of reliable machinery for dispensing justice, meeting the special requirements of children and women in conflict situations, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

17. It was essential to study the question of creating a mechanism to permit the timely reimbursement of the expenses of troop-contributing countries. In that connection, his delegation called on the Members of the Organization to continue carrying out peacekeeping operations and to provide financial resources and troops for that purpose.

18. Ecuador was firmly convinced that the strengthening of peace was the duty of all countries and, being conscious of its responsibility as a Member of the Organization, had decided to increase its participation in peacekeeping operations. Within the framework of a joint operation with Chile, Ecuador would shortly be sending to Haiti a group of 63 military engineers and would be providing equipment for road building.

19. **Mr. Bailly-Niagri** (Côte d'Ivoire) commended the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the important role that it played in coordinating the 17 peacekeeping operations currently being carried out throughout the world, particularly with respect to cooperation with subregional organizations to ensure that peacekeeping missions were as effective as possible. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the results-oriented efforts of the Department had enabled the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to monitor compliance with the ceasefire agreement signed on 17 October 2002 and to benefit from the services provided by United Nations peacekeepers.

20. Peacekeeping missions continued to experience major difficulties in several areas and his delegation wished, in particular, to draw attention to the issue of recruitment of civilian personnel and their safety and security, which was of particular concern to his Government. Côte d'Ivoire had ratified the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and stressed the need to acknowledge the work of peacekeepers, inform the local population about their role and provide them with all necessary logistical support to enable them to operate efficiently and effectively in any conflict zones. The financial, material and human resources of the Department must therefore be strengthened.

21. With respect to recruitment, local staff and non-governmental organizations had an important role to play in peacekeeping operations. The personnel of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1528 (2004) of 27 February 2004 (totalling 6,240), who enjoyed the support of the population and of all parties to the conflict, were working in close cooperation with the military personnel of both camps and taking part in various meetings organized by the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the international community to settle the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and called for recognition of the efforts made by his Government to that end.

22. Disarmament warranted particular attention in the context of peacekeeping. Lasting peace was possible only if peacebuilding were combined with appropriate economic measures. The success of peacekeeping operations in Africa depended on the protection of the national borders of States parties to the conflict and on concerted efforts to implement the various peacekeeping operations.

23. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia) associated himself with the statements made by the representative of Brazil and Morocco on behalf of the Rio Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. Bolivia supported the entire peacekeeping operations system and greatly valued the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to address new challenges in a timely manner. The international community recognized the central role that the United Nations played in the maintenance of international peace and security. It should be noted that the demand for peacekeeping operations across the world exceeded the capacities of the system.

24. Peacekeeping operations involved not only the maintenance of peace but also peacebuilding in countries and regions where outbreaks of violence had occurred. Given that situation, it was unclear whether the Department would be able in the future to fulfil the functions entrusted to it and also solve the problems relating to the scaling-up of operations. Thanks to the

reforms undertaken, the entire peacekeeping operations system had been strengthened, and improvements introduced in its working methods, rapid deployment capacities and relations and coordination with other agencies of the system in order to deal with issues of economic development, social policy, humanitarian work and health care.

25. The new concept of integrated activities broadened the mandate for performing such functions as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, into the life of society, recruitment and professional training of police officers, civilian staff and office workers, combating sexual abuse, protection of civilians, particularly women and children, and dealing with health-care issues, including HIV/AIDS and other diseases. However, the lack of the necessary resources to implement such a mandate was a matter of concern. Given the wide gap between obligations and the resources needed to meet them, there was a need to consider seriously ways of fulfilling the Charter purposes of maintaining international peace and security.

26. Two major factors must be considered. The first involved the underlying political, social, economic and ethnic causes of conflict as well as causes connected with discrimination, religion and intolerance. The second factor involved the ways of resolving such problems, which must be based mainly on conflict-prevention measures. Problem prevention was preferable to problem solving. There were mechanisms such as preventive diplomacy, mediation and other peacekeeping mechanisms.

27. **Mr. Shiweva** (Namibia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The level and dynamics of conflicts in the world at present required an integrated peacekeeping approach and a common understanding and cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and Member States. The many challenges connected with peacekeeping operations could be overcome by pulling together all the available resources of the international community and seeking innovative ideas, and the United Nations must work more effectively with all its partners in matters concerning peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

28. Enhancement and support of regional and subregional peacekeeping operations were crucial, and regional organizations should be encouraged and supported. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in that area would be strengthened by the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council. His delegation commended the support given to subregional organizations in their efforts to find solutions to conflicts in their corresponding subregions and noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

29. Rapid deployment required well-trained and well-equipped troops. The United Nations Standby Arrangements System was one option for ensuring rapid deployment. Because African and other developing countries had great difficulties in implementing the standby arrangement system without the necessary assistance, particularly financial and logistical support, his delegation emphasized the importance of the pre-deployment training of troops in preparation for actual deployment in the mission area and thanked the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its efforts in that regard.

30. Gender mainstreaming was an important element in peacekeeping operations. Of paramount importance was women's full and equal participation at every level of conflict and post-conflict situations, which required, inter alia, an improved recruitment and hiring process based on equitable geographical distribution, gender balance and transparency. His delegation welcomed the forthcoming publication of the Department's gender resource package for peacekeeping operations and other field operations.

31. Special attention should be paid to children affected by armed conflict, including child soldiers. Namibia welcomed the efforts of the Department to appoint child protection advisers in several United Nations missions and encouraged it to continue efforts to that end. Despite some positive changes in the processing of claims for reimbursement, there was still need for improvement. Namibia hoped that the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment would nevertheless soon be able to reach consensus on reimbursement rates, without which the problems relating to reimbursement would be compounded.

32. Given that adequate financial and human resources were needed for any given peacekeeping mission to succeed, it was crucial for Member States to pay their contributions on time and in full. In addition, there was an urgent need for specific measures to enhance the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel in the field.

33. **Mr. Musambachime** (Zambia) said that Mr. Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, had provided a comprehensive briefing to Committee members on the problems encountered by the Organization in its peacekeeping operations and that his delegations associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. His delegation also commended the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its successes over the previous four years in the area of staffing, establishment of the strategic deployment stocks, introduction of a pre-mandate commitment authority and successful liaison and coordination with regional organizations such as the African Union and the European Union.

34. Africa had recently made considerable strides towards maintaining peace on the continent. A number of Governments were actively mobilizing military forces for peacekeeping operations and seeking to defuse political crises before they escalated into large-scale conflicts. The establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council had enhanced the prospects for peace initiatives. Such initiatives, however, could be sustained only if the international community continued to provide financial assistance and support for capacity-building to enable subregions to establish the necessary strategic reserves for rapid deployment.

35. His Government stood ready to support the Department in all its programmes relating to the proposals by the Under-Secretary-General on a civilian police force and civilian staff. The pre-mandate commitment authority, which had proved to be effective, should be strengthened by making available sufficient funds and by regular replenishment of the strategic deployment stocks.

36. **Mr. Dolgov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation remained a strong supporter of United Nations peacemaking activities as the primary form of response to threats to the collective security system in emergency situations. Peacekeeping operations were the most flexible and effective way of settling a wide range of problems relating to international peace and security. The rapid increase in the number of United Nations peacekeeping operations, which had achieved considerable success, constituted striking testimony to the demand for the Organization's services. Much, however, remained to be done.

37. Every emergency situation was unique and required the most effective possible system for dealing with it, in strict conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly defined the key role played by the Security Council at every stage of peacekeeping operations. It was of crucial importance that there should be no circumvention of the Security Council's authority, especially in relation to the use of force in the name of the international community: military force should be used — as a last resort — on an agreed basis and should be reasonable and adequate. It was extremely significant that such a position was reflected in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

38. The Organization's peacemaking experience clearly showed the close links between peacebuilding and the re-establishment of social and economic life in post-conflict countries. Any success largely depended on close coordination between the military, political, civil and reconstruction elements of the operation in question, which again went to underline the growing importance of improved coordination and a rational division of labour between the Security Council and the other principal organs and leading specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. It was essential that there was no diminution of the respective prerogatives of those organs and, in addition, that peacemaking operations should not be overloaded with problems that were not their prime concern.

39. It would be crucial to introduce further improvements to the Organization's "new partnerships" with regional and subregional organizations, or with coalitions of concerned States acting with a Security Council mandate, of which there were numerous commendable examples.

40. He hoped that, at the current session, progress would be made in the search for the satisfactory settlement of a number of complex problems and challenges facing the Organization's peacemaking activities, so that its capacities could be further refined

in the interests of more efficient and effective peacekeeping operations, and that the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change would give an additional impetus to collective efforts to increase the Organization's peacemaking capabilities. The increasing complexity of the problems generated by contemporary conflicts pointed up a need for improvements in the integrated planning and development of multifunctional peacekeeping operations, closer coordination between the various components of missions and, within their own field of responsibility, cooperation with other international institutions on the ground. It was therefore essential to upgrade the role of military expertise, which should be brought in even at the drafting stage of a Security Council resolution, as well as during the planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations. His delegation noted the successful introduction into United Nations practice of integrated working groups for field missions. At the same time, real security for peacekeepers must remain a priority.

41. The implementation of a peacekeeping mandate was best effected within the structure of a peacebuilding mission with a highly qualified staff. That, however, could be achieved only if Member States showed themselves willing to provide the Organization with the necessary staff and resources. In recent years, much more importance had been attached to civilian police and other non-military components of modern multinational peacekeeping operations, which were given responsibility for the implementation of the essential elements of peacebuilding: assistance in ensuring the rule of law, re-establishing a judicial system or strengthening effective State institutions in countries that had emerged from active conflict. Another important factor was exit strategies for peacekeeping operations. In such cases, the Security Council should, together with the troop-contributing States, keep the situation under constant review and, where necessary, amend the mandate, the nature or the dates of the operation concerned. There should be further improvements to the machinery of cooperation between members of the Security Council, troop-contributing States and the United Nations Secretariat. His delegation supported the view that the fullest possible use should be made of the practice of operational consultations in the Council.

42. His Government planned a steady expansion of its participation in United Nations peacemaking activities. A decision had been reached on increasing the Russian contribution to the Organization's standby arrangements system. The Russian Federation was continuing its close cooperation with all interested international partners in order to strengthen the Organization's leadership role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and to enhance its effectiveness in the interests of consolidating global security and stability.

43. **Mr. Kidane** (Ethiopia) said that his Government contributed over 3,400 troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Over the past decade and a half, there had been a surge in such operations and indeed a change of concept, in that operations had become multidimensional. Most included a measure of disarmament, demobilization or reintegration, while landmine clearance remained essential for the revival of the economy in war-torn countries. The safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and associated personnel was a vital concern. In that context, his delegation supported the efforts of the Security Council to expand the scope of application of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Non-military personnel played an increasingly important role in linking peacekeeping with post-conflict peacebuilding. The multidimensional nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations required increasing numbers of civilian police, electoral personnel, human rights experts, information specialists and significant numbers of political and legal advisers.

44. If the international community was to meet the multiple challenges of peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding, it was essential to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which played an important role in maintaining regional peace and security. Training was also essential in equipping peacekeepers for multifaceted missions. Such training must be expanded and sustained in a coordinated and regular fashion to meet the needs of the growing number of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

45. **Mr. Motoc** (Romania), after associating his delegation with the statement by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union, said that security and stability were being increasingly challenged, both globally and regionally. For that

reason, Romania strongly supported the central peacekeeping role played by the United Nations, on the success of which depended the Organization's overall achievements. At the same time, multilateral mechanisms in the field of peacekeeping should continue to be refined so that the international community could respond more effectively to current threats and challenges. His Government was ready to contribute to current efforts to improve the Organization's peacekeeping consultation procedures.

46. Romania, which was deeply committed to maintaining international peace and security, had a significant stake in the decision-making process in peacekeeping, in that it had contributed its share to international efforts to maintain peace in various parts of the world. Since, however, participation in United Nations-authorized missions often involved considerable human, political and financial risks and costs, his country's contributions should not only be a matter for political acknowledgement but should also be taken into account as part of a wider and fairer assessment within the United Nations system.

47. In view of the significant increase in the number and magnitude of peacekeeping operations, which had ever more complex, multifaceted and multidimensional mandates, and in the context of United Nations reform, his delegation considered that countries contributing financial resources and troops, and also neighbouring countries and other stakeholders in United Nations or United Nations-authorized peacekeeping missions, should be given a greater say in shaping decisions on peacekeeping operations. All forms of contribution by Member States should be recognized and factored in when the Organization's overall effectiveness in maintaining and building peace was assessed.

48. The relationship between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries needed to be further strengthened. Security Council resolution 1353 (2001) and the note by the President of the Council (S/2002/56) provided an adequate, consensual and institutionalized framework for decision-making in that regard, but additional steps should be taken for the further empowerment of contributors to peacekeeping operations other than troop-contributing countries. Their views should be more effectively incorporated in the various decision-making processes.

49. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had completed its consideration of agenda item 77.

Agenda item 22: Assistance in mine action (A/59/284 and Add.1)

50. *Mr. Swe (Myanmar) took the Chair.*

51. **The Chairman** recalled that, in its resolution 58/127 of 17 February 2004, the General Assembly had decided to include the item "Assistance in mine action" in the provisional agenda for its fifty-ninth session. General Assembly resolution 58/316 contained the decision to allocate the item to the Fourth Committee. The issue of mine action had previously been considered in plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

52. **Mr. Annabi** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 22, noted the progress made in integrating mine action into the framework of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. As a result, it had become possible to mitigate the threat that mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) posed to civilian populations in post-conflict situations, as well as to humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel.

53. In 2003 and 2004, the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had focused on a range of priority areas. Firstly, the Mine Action Rapid Response Plan had been successfully tried out in Iraq. Secondly, more than 20 countries had continued to receive assistance for establishing mine action priorities and for creating national and local capacities to eliminate the impact of mines and ERW on the civilian population. Thirdly, DPKO had actively participated in efforts to encourage the international financial institutions and regional development banks to integrate mine action into their planning and budgeting exercises. Fourthly, more tools and resources had been made available to donors and policy makers to help enhance awareness of the extent and nature of the threat posed by landmines and ERW.

54. However, the efforts to help people free their communities from the dangers posed by mines and ERW were especially evident in the field. In Afghanistan, more than 8,000 local workers were currently employed in that work and in the past year, thanks to road clearance, conditions had been created for the successful holding of presidential elections

within a short time. Steps were now under way for the full transfer of responsibility for mine action from the United Nations to the Government. A significant improvement in local conditions had also allowed mine action in the Sudan, in the Temporary Security Zone between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in Lebanon, in Iraq and in Burundi.

55. He drew attention to the six recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on assistance in mine action. Member States should continue to support the implementation of the mine action strategy for the period 2001-2005 and also begin work on a new strategy for the period 2006-2010. The Rapid Response Plan should be further integrated into planning processes for United Nations humanitarian and peacekeeping operations and be activated in emergency situations when political developments allowed, and when no other national capacity existed to address the landmine and ERW problem. It would be necessary to secure a greater flow of resources, including into the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action.

56. Member States must continue to support the strengthening of national capacities to address the problem posed by landmines and ERW and to include mine action in their national development and budgetary plans. Fourthly, the international financial institutions must help affected countries to meet targets and achieve the development goals laid down in the Millennium Declaration. It was important that mine action be integrated early in the reconstruction planning phases to ensure that the most pressing needs were met. A noteworthy example was the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan managed by the United Nations.

57. Donor countries contributing funds to mine action should refer to the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects — a unique reference tool that allowed donors to assess country needs in a clear and standardized format. The Portfolio complemented but did not replace existing national strategies and mine action plans. The 2005 Portfolio constituted an appeal for US$ 294 million for 2005 to implement a total of 303 projects in 30 countries and 3 territories. Twenty-one percent of the allocations had been requested by Governments directly, 48 per cent by various United Nations bodies and 30 per cent by non-governmental organizations. Forty-eight per cent of the funds requested were for Asia, 42 per cent for Africa, 6 per cent for Eastern Europe, 1 per cent for Latin America and 3 per cent for global projects.

58. All Member States — and not only State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — should be represented at the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World at the highest level. The process of reviewing the progress attained in implementing the Mine Ban Treaty, which had come into force five years previously, was getting under way. The United Nations welcomed the development of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons which, when it came into force, would form an important framework for post-conflict mine action.

59. Despite the significant capabilities existing at Headquarters and in the field for successfully realizing the United Nations mine action goals, it was important to seek more innovative solutions, to ensure the mobilization of adequate and sustained funding for mine action, and to create and strengthen relevant national capacities.

60. **The Chairman** suggested that the list of speakers on the agenda item should be closed at 6 p.m.

61. *It was so decided.*

62. **Mr. Farhadi** (Afghanistan) said that Afghanistan, as was widely known, was one of the countries most contaminated by landmines. Over the past 25 years, continuous mine infestation had created a catastrophic situation there. Mine accidents in Afghanistan had disabled over 100,000 people, the vast majority of whom were no longer self-reliant. Landmines and unexploded ordnance were seriously damaging the country's economy, in particular agriculture, because vast areas of farming and grazing lands remained unsafe for use. They were a major impediment to post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan, including major road repair and utilities projects. Such projects could not proceed until mine clearance had taken place on the lands in question.

63. Around 6.4 million Afghans lived in or planned to return home to one of 2,400 communities contaminated by mines. In 2003, a total area of 850 square kilometres had mine contamination, while a total of 500 square kilometres had unexploded ordnance. That further complicated the return of

refugees and internally displaced persons to their place of permanent residence.

64. The Government of Afghanistan was firmly committed to freeing the country from the danger of mines. In March 2003, Afghanistan had become a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction (Ottawa Convention). To fulfil its obligations under the Treaty, in 2003 the Government of Afghanistan had formed a Mine Action Consultative Group (MACG). The Group, headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, included representatives of ministries and of other government departments, donors and United Nations agencies concerned with mine action. The Group monitored and reported on Afghanistan's compliance with the Ottawa Treaty.

65. In accordance with the current Strategic Plan for Mine Action in Afghanistan, the areas with a high impact on the communities would be given first priority in clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance; subsequently, demining of other areas would begin. The work was expected to be completed by 2012. Around US$ 300 million would be required for implementing the first stage of the plan, and an additional US$ 200 million for the second stage. The Strategic Plan for Mine Action was also in line with the Government's overall development plan.

66. In the opinion of the delegation of Afghanistan, mine action activities should be considered as an important component of any humanitarian and development assistance to mine-affected countries. Within that activity, priority should be given to victim assistance, including physical rehabilitation, psychological support and socio-economic integration. The delegation of Afghanistan called on donor countries, the United Nations and relevant organizations to continue their technical and financial support, because only joint efforts could free Afghanistan from mines.

67. **Mr. Koné** (Mali) welcomed the efforts of the United Nations to rid the world of the threat of mines. The problem of anti-personnel mines, finding a solution to which was a major aspect of overall disarmament, was a matter of serious concern to the African countries despite the progress made in mine clearance. The use of anti-personnel mines was restricted by the norms of international humanitarian law, and more specifically, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), but mines continued to be a serious danger for many communities throughout the world. Mines, which were sometimes described as weapons which continued the war after the ceasefire, were a serious obstacle to development in many regions of the world.

68. The first Review Conference of countries parties to the Ottawa Convention, which was to be held in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004, would assess the results of activities to rid the world of the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance. It was to be hoped that the Conference would take into account the serious concerns of the countries of the African continent. Because of the numerous armed conflicts in Africa, the continent was the most mine-affected region of the world in terms of mined area. Thousands of hectares of agricultural land were not exploited because of the danger of mines, thereby substantially impeding the economic development of those regions. The Republic of Mali had fortunately not suffered from anti-personnel mines but it was actively participating in international action to eliminate that threat. Mali had been one of the first African countries to ratify the Ottawa Convention.

69. Mali not only would never use anti-personnel mines but also had voluntarily destroyed its stocks of such mines in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention. Moreover, in February 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali, with the support of France and Canada, had organized an international seminar in Bamako in order to promote awareness in African countries of the Ottawa Convention and to promote its ratification. His delegation was pleased to note that 46 African countries had ratified the Convention and that 40 countries had destroyed their stocks of anti-personnel mines.

70. **Mr. Gallardo** (Peru) said that his delegation was in favour of the total elimination of all mines, which caused casualties among children and women, not only in times of conflict but also after the end of hostilities. The Ottawa Convention and its protocols were evidence of a general commitment to demining. Peru greatly appreciated the report of the Secretary-General, supported the conclusions and recommendations contained therein and considered that it was essential to increase the capacity to provide assistance to other

countries. Unfortunately, it had not been possible during the current year to reach a consensus, but his delegation hoped that positive results would be achieved next time.

71. In August 2004, a regional conference had been held in Quito at which the completion of demining operations in the most heavily populated western sector of the northern frontier of Peru had been discussed and the start of bilateral action in the eastern frontier area between Ecuador and Peru. The armed forces of both countries had conducted joint demining operations in remote areas of their common frontier, which was evidence of unprecedented trust not only enabling the two countries to comply with their obligations under the Ottawa Convention but also broadening their capacity to comply with their international obligations. Ecuador and Peru were coordinating their mine clearance activities in the Cordillera del Cóndor region and in the western sector of their common frontier.

72. The two countries would be carrying out joint activities, exchanging technical experience and equipment and information on potentially hazardous regions, planning demining operations, carrying out joint medical evacuation operations and conducting joint information campaigns on the danger of mines. The success achieved in that area demonstrated that joint activity strengthened peaceful relations between countries. In order to continue that work, it was essential to secure the support of the international community and of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. Peru and Ecuador were grateful to those countries and organizations, not only because, thanks to their efforts, it had proved possible to complete the process of mine clearance successfully but also for their support and assistance, which had made it possible to strengthen relations between the two countries.

73. **Mr. Hamburger** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidate countries (Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and, in addition, Iceland, aligned themselves with his statement. Anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war inflicted death and injury around the world. The presence of mines and explosive remnants of war also had serious social and economic consequences, as mines prevented refugees from returning to their homes and constituted an obstacle to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development. Although the resources allocated to mine action had increased in recent years, there was a need to mobilize additional resources and to secure the best possible utilization of them.

74. The First Review Conference of countries parties to the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of mines, which was to be held in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004, was a momentous event in that it would assess the progress made in mine clearance since the adoption of the Convention. The participants in the Conference should also review the critical issues that remained.

75. More than ever before, partners in mine action should strengthen their cooperation and coordination, build on national capacity, increase national ownership and explore ways of mainstreaming the landmine and unexploded ordnance issue into the national development plans and programmes of mine-affected countries. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) had an important role to play in ensuring coordination but effective coordination and increased national ownership were a common task and should therefore be a joint effort by mine-affected countries, donor Governments, regional institutions, national and international non-governmental organizations, as well as appropriate bodies of the United Nations. The European Union welcomed the discussions between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to improve cooperation and coordination mechanisms as well as to enhance transparent prioritization.

76. In recent years the European Union had led informal consultations on a resolution under the agenda item on assistance in mine action. Although progress had been achieved in the informal consultations, it had not been possible to reach consensus on a number of issues. The European Union had therefore decided to introduce a proposal to defer the adoption of a resolution on that matter to the following year. The ultimate goal of the resolution was the relief of human suffering caused by mines and explosive remnants of war and, in that connection, the European Union called on all Member States to combine their efforts in order to achieve progress in that field at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

77. **Mr. Takase** (Japan) said that his country attached great importance to assistance for mine action and

continued to participate actively in that area on the basis that, unless the threat posed by landmines were addressed, efforts to achieve peace and reconstruction could not be effective. His country was pleased that 143 States were parties to the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and that the First Review Conference, to be held in Nairobi in November 2004, would provide an opportunity to assess progress, clarify challenges and establish a concrete action plan with clear priorities and reasonable time frames for the fulfilment of the aims of the convention.

78. Japan also attached importance to promoting research and development for more advanced and efficient mine-action techniques and technology so that mine-related activities could be carried out more safely and cost-effectively. The United Nations had an important role to play in promoting coordinated and concerted efforts in that field. As a donor, Japan was willing to cooperate with United Nations entities to further strengthen coordination and secure the optimum mobilization of resources. To date, Japan had provided aid to more than 30 affected countries and areas, both through bilateral cooperation and through international organizations. That action was intended to support their mine-action activities including mine clearance, victim assistance and mine-awareness training and education. Between the accession of his country to the Ottawa Convention in 1988 and August 2004, the contributions of Japan to mine action had totalled US$ 147 million and Japan's contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action since 1995 had amounted to almost US$ 27.8 million.

79. In Afghanistan, Japan was playing a major role in assisting mine action as part of a reconstruction programme under which former combatants in that country were now being accepted as skilled experts in mine clearance. The Government of Japan was determined to continue to support the efforts of the Afghan people to consolidate peace and enhance nation-building in cooperation with the United Nations and other donors. Furthermore, Japan was currently undertaking field evaluation tests on mine-clearance machines and detectors that had been developed in Japan as part of its programme of assistance to mine clearance.

80. Cambodia was another country in which Japan regarded support for mine action as important. The reduction in the number of mine victims in that country was an example of what could be achieved through the empowerment of the local population.

81. In addition to its financial contributions, Japan had been striving to enhance dialogue with mine-action partners, including non-governmental organizations and other donors and international organizations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had held a landmine seminar in Tokyo in March 2004. Some local governments in Japan were also making significant efforts in that field. In particular, one municipality with a population of about 10,000, in cooperation with a Japanese non-governmental organization, had been involved in the organization of an international children's conference on the impact of landmines and the necessity of mine-awareness education. It had been reported that 1,200 children, including children from Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Djibouti, Laos, Nepal, Rwanda and Uganda, had taken part in the conference.

82. **Ms. Ekey** (Norway) said that her country believed that certain principles were important if the problems caused by anti-personnel mines were to be properly addressed. States should comply with their obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. National ownership of mine action and mine victim assistance was also vital. Mine-affected countries should assess their own needs and define their own priorities. To make better use of resources, mine action needed to be coordinated at the lowest possible level. The cooperation between national and local authorities, field operators and donors should be enhanced. Mine action should be further integrated into both the humanitarian and development agendas.

83. The primary legal framework for mine action was the Ottawa Convention, which provided not only for a total ban on anti-personnel mines, but also for international cooperation and assistance in mine action. The First Review Conference of the Convention would be held the following month in Nairobi; Norway's priorities at the Conference would be to promote the intensification and acceleration of mine clearance efforts, at the same time as adequately ensuring effective care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine victims. The most effective and expeditious fulfilment of article 5 of the Convention was crucial in that regard.

84. The United Nations had an important role to play in mine action. The implementing agencies of the United Nations should continue to include mine action in their regular activities whenever appropriate. The task of UNMAS was to support the necessary coordination within the United Nations system and to ensure that mine action continued to be part of the discussions and strategies of the United Nations.

85. **Mr. Baum** (Switzerland) said that, although several countries and a number of non-State actors still produced mines, nearly 50 countries had not yet committed to the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of landmines and he appealed to those States to accede to the Convention as soon as possible. In that context, Switzerland had high hopes of the Conference in Nairobi, which was to be held from 29 November to 3 December 2004. His country hoped that a political declaration to be adopted in Nairobi would reflect the determination of States to mobilize society to combat mines. Switzerland recognized the important role of UNMAS as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and looked forward to the revised United Nations mine action policy. Only with clear mandates and a common purpose could all the United Nations mine action partners operate most effectively to combat the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war throughout the world.

86. The previous year, his country had adopted a new four-year strategy for mine action. The current volume of disbursements of approximately US$ 12 million for mine action would be slightly increased in the coming years. The funds would be used to finance a number of projects in the fields of demining, mine risk education, victim assistance and advocacy. The support of Switzerland for the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining was a major pillar of his country's engagement. The Centre was active in providing operational assistance to mine-affected countries and in undertaking research, and provided methodological assistance in the implementation of demining programmes. The Geneva Centre also assisted Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Ottawa Convention and his country invited States and the wider mine-action community to continue to draw on the expertise of the Centre and make use of its infrastructure in general.

87. Since January 2004, Switzerland had been chairing the Mine Action Support Group, an informal group that brought together once a month the main donor countries to discuss policy issues related to mine action. One of the issues discussed by the Group was the mainstreaming of mine action into development projects. His country was encouraged by the recognition of the World Bank that mine pollution was for many affected countries a significant obstacle to development. The Group was also very much involved in mine action projects as a contribution to peace processes since mine action was often one of the first issues on which parties in dispute could agree in peace negotiations.

88. Switzerland deeply regretted that negotiations on agenda item 22 had failed during the current year despite the flexibility of many Member States. Notwithstanding the lack of a substantial resolution at the present session, Switzerland would continue to act on the basis that mine action was of great importance in development and in peace processes, and would also insist on the need to resolve the problem of the use of anti-personnel mines by non-State actors.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.